

Take the Stairs

Agency Wellness Champions Meeting

5/29/12

What we know

Point-of-Decision Prompts to Encourage Use of Stairs changes behavior—they get more people to take the stairs.

Point-of-decision prompts are motivational signs placed in or near stairwells or at the base of elevators and escalators to encourage individuals to increase stair use. These signs:

- Inform people about health or weight loss benefits from taking the stairs, and/or
- Remind people already predisposed to becoming more active, for health or other reasons, about an opportunity at hand to do so

Interventions evaluated in this category involved prompts used alone or in combination with stairwell enhancements (e.g., music in stairwells) to increase stair use.

The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends point-of-decision prompts on the basis of strong evidence of effectiveness in increasing the percentage of people choosing to take the stairs rather than an elevator or escalator. There were not enough studies to determine if stair or stairwell enhancements (e.g., paint, carpet, art, signs, and music) increased the effectiveness of these interventions.

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/worksite/index.html>

Why use the stairs?

- “Just two minutes of stair climbing a day burns enough calories to eliminate the one pound an average adult gains each year.”
— [NYC DOH](#)
- “Using the stairs burns almost 700% the number of calories you burn standing in an elevator.”
— [NYC DOH](#)
- “Men who climbed at least 20 floors a week (about 3 floors a day) had a 20% lower risk of stroke or death from all causes.”
— [NYC DOH](#)
- “Using the stairs has been shown to raise good cholesterol and improve cardiovascular health.”
— [NYC DOH](#)
- “Climbing up the stairs is a good cardiovascular exercise but going both up and down stairs will help lower your LDL or bad cholesterol.”
— [TheMedGuru](#)
- “Walking down the stairs also reduces the blood-sugar levels, which can help in dropping your risk for developing type 2 diabetes.”
— [TheMedGuru](#)

- “There is a strong association between stair climbing and bone mineral density at the hip and whole body, in post-menopausal women.”
— *Coupland et al. 1999*
- “Stair climbing increases leg power and may be an important priority in reducing the risk of injury from falls in the elderly.”
— *Allied Dunbar Survey, 1992*

New York Times Fitness & Nutrition: Great Workout, Forget the View:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/19/health/nutrition/19fitness.html?pagewanted=all>

New York Times: To Improve Public Health, City Urges Use of Stairs

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/10/to-improve-public-health-city-urges-use-of-stairs/>

How to implement a Take the Stairs initiative:

1. Take the stairs yourself.
2. Wellness committee support, leader support.
3. Work with facilities mgmt.
4. Assess the existing conditions of the stairs for safety, maintenance and cleanliness
5. Make improvements: safety, paint, treads.
6. Add point of decision prompts at entries to stairways and at elevators.
7. Encourage leaders to take the stairs
8. Promote upgrade.
9. Have receptionist give directions via stairs.
10. Evaluate pre and post: for 30 minutes at 10 and 2 on Wed before, 10 and 2 on Wed after.

Here is a great resource, Move More North Carolina:

<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/StairwellGuide/StairwellGuide.html>

The Promotions:

Various sources! Use your team of wellness leaders, managers and facilities to pick the campaign that would most appeal to them and your agency.

Get Healthy Clark County <http://www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/worksites-wellness/take-the-stairs.php>



Work Well Take the Stairs (contact Linda Feltes)



Work Well North Carolina: <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/StairwellGuide/StairwellGuide.html>



CDC's Take the Stairs Campaign:

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/motivational_signs.htm

